Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A subpart of a drill string, the subpart ~~including an outer circumferential surface which is contoured and adapted to engage a wall of an open uncased borehole in a sliding action with a low angle of attack essentially continuously~~ comprising a central main section and two or more extendable elements adapted to extend under drilling conditions to contact an inner wall of the borehole and to exert~~ing~~ a compacting pressure on at least one of mud cake ~~and/or~~ or cuttings present in ~~the~~ an annulus between the drill string and said wall.

2. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim 1 further comprising a bottom and top section for connection to the drill string ~~and a main section having an inner central bore for the passage of drilling fluid from the surface and one or more outer openings for said drilling fluid and cuttings return flow to the surface wherein an outer contour of said subpart is shaped to engage the open uncased wall of said borehole at an angle of attack of less than 45 degrees and extends to an outer diameter of more than 70% of a nominal diameter of said borehole~~.

3. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim 2 ~~comprising a cylindrical main section having an outer diameter of more than 70% of the nominal diameter of the borehole and~~ wherein the main section comprises one or more bores providing a return flow path for the drilling fluid and cuttings.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim 2 ~~having~~ wherein at least one of the bottom and top sections comprises ~~one or two~~ a connectors adapted to connect to a drill collar section of the drill string.

6. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim 2 ~~having a~~ wherein the bottom and top section are configured to provide ~~for~~ a force-transmitting connection to the drill string ~~thus~~ so that the subpart ~~following~~ follows a rotational motion of the drill string generated at a surface location.

7. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim 1 wherein the ~~contoured surface~~ two or more extendable elements ~~is~~ are made from an abrasive resistant material.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim ~~8~~ 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements engage under drilling conditions the wall of the borehole at an angle of attack of less than 45 degrees.

10. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim ~~8~~ 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements include compliant elements.

11. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim ~~8~~ 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements are adapted to engage the wall of the borehole when pressurized drilling fluid is pumped from a surface location through the drilling string.

12. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim ~~8~~ 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements include one or more nozzles connected by a flow path to the inner opening of the subpart.

13. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim ~~8~~ 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements include one or more hinge sections.

14. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim ~~8~~ 1 wherein each of the two or more extendable elements comprises a first extendable section and a second extendable section and a hinge element connecting said first and second extendable sections.

15. (Currently amended) The subpart of claim ~~8~~ 1 wherein each of the two or more extendable elements comprises an arcuate vane element rotatably mounted on a hinge element.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently amended) A method of consolidating a borehole during a drilling operation comprising the steps of

- assembling a drill string including one or more subparts each having an outer circumferential surface which is contoured and adapted to engage a wall of an open uncased borehole with a low angle of attack essentially continuously exerting a compacting pressure on at least one of mud cake ~~and/or~~ or cuttings present in the annulus between the drill string and said wall;
- pumping from a surface location a drilling fluid; ~~and~~
- using the drilling fluid to force the outer circumferential surface into contact with the formation;
- rotating said drill string from said surface location; thereby causing the subpart or subparts to slide along the wall of the borehole.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein the outer circumferential surface of the one or more subparts is essentially continuously forced into contact with the wall surrounding the borehole during the drilling operation.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)